

## **Middle School Lesson 3**

### **The Emancipation Proclamation vs. the Thirteenth Amendment**

#### **Opening Quote\***

“....It is the central act of my administration and the great event of the nineteenth century.”

-Abraham Lincoln, as recorded by several sources in reflection on the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Trace the developments that led Lincoln to write the Emancipation Proclamation
- Evaluate the provisions of the Thirteenth Amendment
- Explore the purpose and effectiveness of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment
- Compare the documents' strengths and weaknesses using a Venn Diagram
- Explore African American opinions of the document

#### **Materials**

*\*Indicates material included at the end of the lesson.*

- For the teacher:
  - Opening Quote\*
  - Background information on the Opening Quote\*
  - Link to a view of the original Emancipation Proclamation document and transcription at the National Archives – <http://www.archives.gov/> (search under keywords)
  - Link to a view of one of the original Thirteenth Amendment resolutions and transcription at the National Archives – <http://www.archives.gov/> (search under keywords)
  - Sample of Venn Diagram\*
  - “Meeting Mr. Lincoln”\* (Background reading for teachers)
- For the students:
  - Pencils, pens, notebooks
  - Written Document Analysis Worksheet\* (can be used as overhead and/or a handout for students)
  - Transcription of the Emancipation Proclamation\*
  - Transcription of Thirteenth Amendment\*
  - Blank Venn Diagram\*

## **Guiding Questions for the Documents**

- **Why did Lincoln describe the Emancipation Proclamation as the central act of his presidency?**
- **How does the Thirteenth Amendment relate to the Emancipation Proclamation?**  
*The Emancipation Proclamation was not a law passed by Congress, and it did not apply to the entire United States. The Thirteenth Amendment made the prohibition of slavery the law in the entire nation.*
- **What power is the Emancipation Proclamation lacking that is provided in the Thirteenth Amendment?**
- **What was required to make a law that freed slaves?** *Needed to have a Constitutional Amendment because the Supreme Court had already ruled that regular laws would violate the due process clause of the Constitution.*
- **Who has the power to make laws?** *You can talk about the different roles of the legislature, the president, and the courts regarding the creation and interpretation of law.*

## **Suggested Lesson Procedure**

- Post Opening Quote\* on the board or overhead.
- Ask the following questions to generate discussion:
  - **What is a central act?** *For instance, what would you think is the central act of this school year, or of President Bush's presidency?*
  - **What would be the essentials of an act for it to be called "central"?**
- Share information about Lincoln's presidency and the job of an American president in general to help students understand Lincoln's choices and actions in announcing the Emancipation Proclamation and then describing it as his "central act."
- Show overhead of Written Document Analysis Worksheet\* and pass out copies to students.
- Show the image of the original Emancipation Proclamation using the link to the National Archives. Discuss the importance of preserving and using primary documents when studying history.
- Pass out transcripts of both documents (Emancipation Proclamation\* and Thirteenth Amendment\*). Read excerpts aloud using a **cloze reading style**. (*This is where the reader reads a part of a sentence and then pauses so the class fills in the word. For example, "Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by \_\_\_\_\_, containing, among other things the following, to wit:..."*. The students are following along and fill in the missing words aloud as the reader pauses. This may have to be practiced a few times using the same sentence until the students catch onto the method.)
- After this first read through, assign some groups to analyze the Emancipation Proclamation\* and others to analyze the Thirteenth Amendment.\* Have the students decide what the three main points of each document are. Using a Venn diagram,\* have students analyze the documents to see what they can discern about Lincoln's views on civic duties and rights of citizens.

### **Exit Activities**

- Have each group write a one-sentence summary of the Emancipation Proclamation and a one-sentence summary of the Thirteenth Amendment.
- Review the Opening Quote\* and conclude with thoughts on why the document is the “central act” of President Lincoln’s administration.

### **Extending the Lesson**

- The African American Perspective: Read the two letters\* written by African Americans in response to the Emancipation Proclamation. One is written to President Lincoln on July 1, 1863 by the mother of a Northern black soldier; the other one is written by Corporal James H. Gooding of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Colored Infantry. (Corporal Gooding was featured in the movie, *Glory*.) Questions\* are provided following the letters.
- Film clip from the movie *Glory*. Choose a section featuring Corporal Gooding.
- Analysis of a painting entitled, “First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before Lincoln’s Cabinet” by artist Francis Bicknell Carpenter (the activity is available from The White House Historical Society website at [www.whitehousehistory.org/04/subs/04\\_b\\_1863.html](http://www.whitehousehistory.org/04/subs/04_b_1863.html)).